

CLAIMS:

We claim:

1 1. A method comprising:
2 sending to a manufacturer a customer request for assembly instructions for a
3 grouping of components; and
4 presenting to assemblers a set of assembly instructions which are customized and
5 specific to said grouping of components.

1 2. A method according to claim 1 wherein sending includes:
2 scanning bar-code information from said components;
3 grouping said bar-code information; and
4 generating said request for assembly instructions based on said grouped bar-code
5 information and on specifications defined by said manufacturer.

1 3. A method according to claim 1 wherein presenting includes:
2 receiving said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer.

1 4. A method according to claim 3 wherein presenting further includes:
2 formatting said received set of assembly instructions such that they are in a format
3 utilizable by said assemblers.

1 5. A method according to claim 4 wherein presenting further includes:
2 printing out said formatted set of assembly instructions for said assemblers.

1 6. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
2 waiting to receive said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer prior
3 to assembling of said group of components.

1 7. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
2 assembling said group of components using said set of assembly instructions.

1 8. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
2 replying to said customer request by sending said customized set of assembly
3 instructions to said customer.

1 9. A method according to claim 8 wherein replying includes:
2 receiving said request for assembly instructions from said customer;
3 formulating a query for a knowledge base, said query based upon the content of
4 said request; and
5 retrieving from said knowledge base said customized set of assembly instructions,
6 said set formed in response to said query.

1 10. A method according to claim 9 wherein said replying further includes:
2 formatting said retrieved customized set of instructions into a network-ready
3 message.

1 11. A method according to claim 2 further comprising:
2 initiating a component grouping application software at the location where said
3 components are received, said software performing said grouping; and

4 sending said grouped bar-code information to a customer server, said customer
5 server also generating said request.

1 12. A method according to claim 1 wherein said manufacturer and said
2 customer communicate over a communications network.

1 13. A system comprising:
2 an information device utilized by an assembler of a group of components, said
3 device configured to group bar-code information scanned from said components;
4 a customer server coupled to said information device over a network, said server
5 configured to send a request for assembly instructions, said request based on said grouped
6 bar-code information; and
7 a manufacturer server able to communicate with said customer server, said
8 manufacturer server replying to said request with a set of customized assembly
9 instructions, said instructions specific said group of components represented in said
10 request.

1 14. A system according to claim 13 wherein said customer server receives said
2 reply from said manufacturer server, said customer server further configured to present to
3 said assembler said set of customized assembly instructions in a utilizable format.

1 15. A system according to claim 13 further comprising:
2 a knowledge base coupled to said manufacturer server, said knowledge configured
3 to provide said set of customized assembly in response to receiving a query from said
4 manufacturer server.

1 16. A system according to claim 15 wherein said query is formulated by said
2 manufacturer server based upon said request from said customer server.

1 17. A system according to claim 13 wherein said information device is a
2 personal computer.

1 18. A system according to claim 13 wherein said information device is a
2 personal digital assistant.

1 19. A system according to claim 13 wherein said manufacturer server and said
2 customer server are connected via a network.

1 20. An article comprising a computer readable medium having instructions
2 stored thereon which when executed cause:
3 sending to a manufacturer a customer request for assembly instructions for a
4 grouping of components; and
5 presenting to assemblers a set of assembly instructions which are customized and
6 specific to said grouping of components.

1 21. An article according to claim 20 wherein sending includes:
2 scanning bar-code information from said components;
3 grouping said bar-code information; and
4 generating said request for assembly instructions based on said grouped bar-code
5 information and on specifications defined by said manufacturer.

1 22. An article according to claim 20 wherein presenting includes:
2 receiving said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer.

1 23. An article according to claim 22 wherein presenting further includes:
2 formatting said received set of assembly instructions such that they are in a format
3 utilizable by said assemblers.

1 24. An article according to claim 23 wherein presenting further includes:
2 printing out said formatted set of assembly instructions for said assemblers.

1 25. An article according to claim 20 further causing:
2 waiting to receive said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer prior
3 to assembling of said group of components.

1 26. An article according to claim 20 further causing:
2 assembling said group of components using said set of assembly instructions.

1 27. An article according to claim 20 further causing:
2 replying to said customer request by sending said customized set of assembly
3 instructions to said customer.

1 28. An article according to claim 27 wherein replying includes:
2 receiving said request for assembly instructions from said customer;
3 formulating a query for a knowledge base, said query based upon the content of
4 said request; and

5 retrieving from said knowledge base said customized set of assembly instructions,
6 said set formed in response to said query.

1 29. An article according to claim 28 wherein said replying further includes:
2 formatting said retrieved customized set of instructions into a network-ready
3 message.

1 30. An article according to claim 21 further causing:
2 initiating a component grouping application software at the location where said
3 components are received, said software performing said grouping; and
4 sending said grouped bar-code information to a customer server, said customer
5 server also generating said request.